

5. What's Being Done To Improve Water Security?

What Security Measures Are In Place To Protect Water Systems?

Drinking water utilities today find themselves facing new responsibilities due to concerns over water system security and counter-terrorism. EPA is committed to the safety of public drinking water supplies and has taken numerous steps to work with utilities, other government agencies, and law enforcement to minimize threats.

The Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002 requires that all community water systems serving more than 3,300 people evaluate their susceptibility to potential threats and identify corrective actions. EPA has provided assistance to help utilities with these **Vulnerability Assessments** by giving direct grants to large systems, supporting self-assessment tools, and providing technical help and training to small and medium utilities. For more information on water system security, see www.epa.gov/safewater/security.

How Can I Help Protect My Drinking Water?

Local drinking water and wastewater systems may be targets for terrorists and other would-be criminals



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wishing to disrupt and cause harm to your community water supplies or wastewater facilities.

Because utilities are often located in isolated areas, drinking water sources and wastewater collection systems may cover large areas that are difficult to secure and patrol. Residents can be educated to notice and report any suspicious activity in and around local water utilities. Any residents interested in protecting their water resources and community as a whole can join together with law enforcement, neighborhood watch groups, water suppliers, wastewater operators, and other local public health officials. If you witness suspicious activities, report them to your local law enforcement authorities.

Examples of suspicious activity might include:

- People climbing or cutting a utility fence
- People dumping or discharging material to a water reservoir

- Unidentified truck or car parked or loitering near waterway or facilities for no apparent reason
- Suspicious opening or tampering with manhole covers, fire hydrants, buildings, or equipment



- People climbing or on top of water tanks
- People photographing or videotaping utility facilities, structures or equipment
- Strangers hanging around locks or gates

Report suspicious activity to local authorities

Do not confront strangers. Instead report suspicious activities to local authorities.

When reporting an incident:

- State the nature of the incident
- Identify yourself and your location
- Identify location of activity
- Describe any vehicle involved (color, make, model, plate number)
- Describe the participants (how many, sex, race, color of hair, height, weight, clothing)

For emergencies, dial 9-1-1 or other local emergency response numbers.

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